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LEISTEN
WOODARD
SECRET WARS

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SECRET WARS

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003 VARIANT EDITION

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In Dystopia, the heroes of old are mere legends, and the inhabitants of the domain live under the strict rule of their lord and master, Baron MAESTRO…but not for long. A small band of rebels seeks to overthrow his authority.

Among those who fight is the mutant warrior Ruby Summers. Ruby, who had taken to wandering the desert on the outskirts of DYSTOPIA, came across a man claiming to be the legendary Odin! In the hopes that the former god would advance their cause against Baron Maestro, Ruby led the weakened man to the revolt's underground base only to discover that "Odin" was just Maestro in disguise!

The leader of the anti-Maestro revolt, Major Thaddeus Ross a.k.a. the THING, duked it out with Maestro but was soon apprehended and taken to Maestro's palace!

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LAND & WOODARD COVER • **MIKE DEODATO** VARIANT

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baron maestro's keep
I DON'T TRUST HER.
SKOOTER, WE'VE BEEN OVER THIS.
NOT CARING.
SKOOTER, LISTEN--

WHY SHOULD I LISTEN TO YOU, RUBY? YOU GOT ZERO CRED WITH ME!
YOU LED THE MAESTRO RIGHT TO US! *RIGHT TO US!*
WELL, YOU THOUGHT *WRONG*, DIDN'T'CHA?!
I THOUGHT HE WAS ODIN...
AND NOW HE'S GOT MAJOR ROSS LOCKED UP AND DOING WHO-KNOWS-WHAT TO 'IM! THAT'S ASSUMING THAT HE'S EVEN STILL ALIVE!
AND NOW YOU WANT US TO TRUST ONE OF HIS DOGS OF WAR TO LEAD A TROOP RIGHT INTO THE MAESTRO'S LAP?
I KNOW IT SOUNDS CRAZY...
NOT SOUNDS! *IS!* CRAZY!
I JUST GOT DONE RELOCATING ALL THE PEOPLE WE GOT STASHED UNDERNEATH! AND NOW WE'RE SUPPOSED TO JUST MARCH RIGHT INTO THE MAESTRO'S HOUSE? UNDER HER GUIDANCE?
WHY?
BECAUSE I'M ALL YOU'VE GOT.

JANIS?
LAYLA SAVED RUBY WHEN SHE DIDN'T HAVE TO, SKOOTER.
I'M GETTING A SOLID VIBE OFF HER.
AND BESIDES, SHE'S RIGHT. WE DON'T HAVE A CHOICE. NOT IF WE WANT TO SPRING THE BOSS.
=SIIIIIGH=
I'M GONNA REGRET THIS, BUT OKAY. I'LL GATHER A GROUP OF OUR BEST GUNS.
SO WHAT'S THE PLAN?
THERE'S A BACK ENTRANCE TO THE CASTLE. IT'S USED TO DUMP OUT THE CORPSES OF PEOPLE THE MAESTRO DISPOSES OF.
I'LL OPEN IT FOR YOU AND YOU SNEAK IN THAT WAY.
THEN I'LL LEAD YOU TO YOUR BOSS AND WE FREE HIM.
AND THEN WE GO FOR THE MAESTRO.
THAT'S THE PLAN.
I LIKE THAT PART.

later
ARE THEY IN?
THEY ARE.
AND YOU REALLY THINK RUBY AND HER CREW CAN TAKE DOWN THE MAESTRO, LAYLA?
SHHHHH!
WHAT? WHAT IS IT?
DAMMIT, LINQON. KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN! THE MAESTRO HAS EARS EVERYWHERE!
YOU AND DWAYNE HAVEN'T BEEN TALKING TO ANYONE, HAVE YOU?
NO, I SWEAR! DWAYNE--?
NADA.
GET WEAPONED UP. I'M BRINGING THEM IN THROUGH THE SOUTH DOOR.
OOOO, GOOD PLAN.
WITH ANY LUCK, THEY'VE ASSEMBLED A STRIKE TEAM TO GET THE JOB DONE.
AND IF THEY HAVEN'T?
THEN TODAY IS A GOOD DAY TO DIE.

THIS IS A BAD ID--
SHUT UP. WE SCAN WHAT YOU THINK. STOP SAYING IT.
YOU GUYS DOWN THERE? IT'S DARK, I CAN'T SEE.
YEAH, WE'RE HERE.
HERE YOU GO.
I'LL GO FIRST. THE REST OF YOU, STAY TIGHT.
THIS IS A--
SHUT UP!

WHERE'S THE BOSS?
I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE HE GOT HERE, BUT I ASSUME THAT HE'S IN THE DETENTION CELLS IN THE BASEMENT.
SO THAT'S WHERE WE'RE GOING?
MAKES THE MOST SENSE.
HOW'RE WE GONNA GET THERE? THERE'S TOO MANY OF US TO BE QUIET DOWN THE CORRIDOR!
THE CORRIDOR ISN'T GOING TO BE AN ISSUE.
WHOAAAA. THAT'S NICE. HOW'D YOU KNOW IT WAS THERE?
I KNOW STUFF.
COME ON. HURRY UP.
WE'RE HURRYING!

HOW MANY OF YOU ARE THERE? SOLDIERS WHO ARE AGAINST THE MAESTRO?
THERE'S A COUPLE DOZEN WHO TALK A GOOD GAME. BUT LINQON AND DWAYNE ARE THE ONLY ONES I TRUST IMPLICITLY.
HOW MUCH FARTHER?
RIGHT THERE. THEN TO THE LEFT.
THE HEAVY-DUTY CELL IS DOWN AT THE END. IF HE'S ANYWHERE, HE'S THERE.
LEAD THE WAY.
THAT IT?
IT IS.
BEEP
THIS IS IT. GET READY.
WHAT THE--?

HE'S NOT HERE.
I CAN SEE THAT HE'S NOT HERE! WHERE IS HE?
I... I DON'T KNOW.
WHOA! WAIT--!
WHERE IS HE?! WHAT ARE YOU PLAYING AT?!
I KNEW IT WAS A TRICK!
IT'S NOT A TRICK, I SWEAR!
I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE--
HANDS IN THE AIR!
I SAID, HANDS IN THE AIR! RIGHT NOW!

I DON'T DO WELL WITH ORDERS!
BLAM!

LET'S GET OUTTA HERE! THIS WAY!
NOBODY MOVE!
OR, Y'KNOW, MAYBE ANOTHER WAY.

JAAAAMIE!!!
TAKE THEM DOWN!
STAY STEADY! WHEN SHE STOPS BLASTING, OPEN FIRE!
JAAAAAAAMIEEEEE!!!
WHO THE HELL IS JAMIE?!
WHA--?
KEEP BACK!!!

IS THAT...?
RAAWRRRR
JAMIE, YES. RAISED HIM FROM A PUP.

COME HERE, JAMIE!
THAAAT'S MY GOOOOD BOY!
AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO THINKS THIS IS REALLY WEIRD?
YOU GET USED TO IT.
COME ON. LET'S GO.
WHERE, EXACTLY?
YOU WANTED TO TAKE ON THE MAESTRO? THIS IS THE TIME TO DO IT.
WITHOUT THE BOSS?
YOUR BOSS IS OBVIOUSLY DEAD.
YOU WANT VENGEANCE? OR DO YOU WANT TO JUST GET OUT OF HERE?
YOUR CALL.
FOR THE BOSS.
FOR THE BOSS!
OKAY, THEN.

WHOEVER IT IS, THEY'RE THROUGH HERE! TWO-BY-TWO FORMA--
FOLLOW ME! UP THE STAIRS!
STILL DON'T TRUST HER?
I'M GETTING USED TO HER.
WHERE'S THE MAESTRO?!
PROBABLY IN HIS THRONE ROOM! BUT THERE WILL BE A *LOT* OF GUARDS.
LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.

STAND DOWN!!!
I DON'T THINK SO!
RUBY! TAKE THEM DOWN!
KRAM
WELL, WELL...

THADDEUS, IT SEEMS THAT YOUR COMPANIONS WOULD CARE TO JOIN US IN OUR REPAST.

THERE ARE PLENTY OF CHAIRS AROUND. FEEL FREE TO PULL SOME UP.

WE WERE JUST GOING OVER THE DETAILS OF OUR NEW WORKING ARRANGEMENTS, AND BELIEVE IT OR NOT, YOUR NAMES CAME UP QUITE FREQUENTLY.

THE ROAST, BY THE WAY, IS PARTICULARLY DELICIOUS TONIGHT.

AND I SEE THAT YOU HAVE SOME OF MY STAFF ON YOUR SIDE. FORTUNATELY, I AM IN A FORGIVING MOOD.

THIS IS...THIS IS INSANE.
WHAT DID YOU DO TO HIM?
WHAT DID YOU DO?!
HE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING, JANIS.
WE'VE BEEN TALKING, THAT'S ALL.
"TALKING"?!
"TALKING"?!?
IT'S WHAT GROWN-UPS DO.
HE'S THE ENEMY!
I'M NOT JUST FORGETTING THAT HE--
ALL OF YOU, SIT DOWN.
SIDDOWN, I SAID!
THIS ISN'T GOING THE WAY I THOUGHT IT WOULD.
NO KIDDING.

CAN WE EAT?
NO.
WOULD YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT THE SHOCK IS GOING ON HERE?
THADDEUS AND I HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING OUR MUTUAL DESIRES.
THE MOST PROMINENT ONE HE HAS IS THAT HE WANTS ME OUT OF DYSTOPIA.
BY STARTLING COINCIDENCE, THAT'S WHAT I WANT AS WELL.
YOU...WANT OUT?
I DO.
AND WHERE EXACTLY DO YOU WANT TO GO?
I WANT TO DEFEAT DOOM AND TAKE HIS PLACE.
DEFEAT DOOM?
BWAAHAHAHAA!
DOOM IS GOD!
YOU'VE GOT TO BE JOKING!
DO I LOOK LIKE I'M JOKING?

NO. YOU DON'T.
BUT WE STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THIS IS ABOUT. YOU CAN'T BEAT DOOM. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
NO. IT'S NOT.
IT CAN BE DONE WITH THIS.
THE PATH TO IT IS CHALLENGING AND TREACHEROUS. IT IS IN A FAR-OFF LAND, GUARDED BY FEARSOME TROLLS.
BUT MR. ROSS AND I... AND IDEALLY YOU...CAN OBTAIN IT. ONCE I HAVE IT, I CAN USE IT TO DESTROY DOOM AND TAKE OVER THE WORLD.
AND YOU CAN HAVE DYSTOPIA ALL TO YOURSELVES.
WHAT'S IT CALLED?
"IT IS CALLED... THE *DESTROYER*."
AND IT WILL BE MINE.
to be continued...